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COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0606

October 4, 2006

The Honorable Carlos Gutierrez
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
Room 5421
14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Gutierrez,

I sent you a letter in mid-June requesting information about the "Security and Prosperity Partnership," or SPP. I appreciate your reply, but several new questions have arisen as a result of documents that have recently become public. In addition, I would still like to know what Commerce is citing as the Congressional action that authorized the formation of the SPP.

I know the administration has given assurances that the SPP is not a veiled effort to create a "North American Union," nor an effort designed to dilute American sovereignty by entering into a European Union-like arrangement with Canada and Mexico. I appreciate those assurances, and realize that there are legitimate areas of shared concern between the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, and that those concerns must be discussed.

Nonetheless, I am concerned about several "recommendations" from the U.S. component of the "North American Competitive Council" (NACC) contained in the aforementioned documents. These recommendations seem to go beyond mutual understanding and dialogue.

For example, with regard to financial services, the NACC has recommended that the U.S., Canada and Mexico ***"Work toward acceptance of equivalent standards, objectives, surveillance and enforcement."***

In the section regarding food and agriculture policy, the NACC calls for the three countries to ***"cooperate in the design and development of common standards."*** The recommendations also call on the nations to, ***"Work towards [a] common scientific approach for food labels among all three NAFTA partners."***

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In the section on pandemic control, the Council recommends that *"...all borders and major roads remain open...to allow the unimpeded flow of domestic and international commerce."*

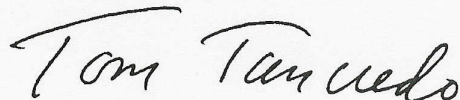
With regard to energy and tax policy, the NACC calls for the creation of a *"North America virtual financing network,"* an *"interconnected [electricity] grid system,"* and *"a tri-national policy that would establish tax exemptions for private-sector R&D."*

The most troubling recommendations appear in the section entitled "Improving Cross-Border Mobility (Goods / Services / People)." In that section, the NACC recommends that *"the governments evaluate moving customs processes further inland...to take the pressure off the border,"* and to examine *"harmonizing commercial processes for clearance of commercial shipments."*

The NACC also calls for pushing back compliance with the 9-11 Commissions recommendation that all foreign travelers present a passport to enter the U.S.. Specifically, they call for extending *"the implementation deadline of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative."* The NACC goes even further by recommending that *"The Secretary of DHS...set up a limited short term pass program or otherwise facilitate people who come to the border without documents,"* and that *"...a reasonable grace period should be established at border crossings during which time people without documents are educated about their options and allowed to pass."*

Again, I appreciate administration assurances that the focus of the SPP is not to dilute American sovereignty. Unfortunately, however, these "recommendations" seem to be at odds with those assurances. As such, I would ask that you consider suspending Commerce Department participation in this tri-lateral effort until Congress has a chance to examine the goals of the SPP and determine whether or not its goals are consistent with those of the Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Tancredo". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Tancredo
Member Congress